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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000894

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG AND AF/C
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: RULING PARTY STILL POSITIVE ON US-SUDAN RELATIONS

REF: KHARTOUM 892

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) MFA U/S and National Congress Party (NCP) insider Mutriff Siddiq told CDA Fernandez June 15 that Sudan remains positive about the prospects for improved US-Sudan relations despite SE Williamson's departure from Khartoum without reaching an agreement. Siddiq said the GOS plans to follow through on commitments discussed with the American delegation regarding humanitarian access in Darfur and UNAMID deployment even in the absence of an actual agreement, though the bilateral items will be tabled for now "which is in the interests of your embassy." Siddiq was positive even regarding the June 8 Abyei agreement, noting that SE Williamson had an impact on the ultimate agreement that was reached between the NCP and the SPLM following his departure, and that the agreement "incorporated the spirit of the talks with the Americans." CDA urged that the GOS actually implement the Abyei agreement in full and also cease support for Chadian rebels, in the interests of facilitating possible future talks.

12. (C) Siddiq said that President Bashir himself remains interested in continued talks with the US. "Although time may not allow you to make further progress," observed Siddiq, "we remain open to further talks." Siddiq said the GOS will facilitate UNAMID deployment "because it benefits us as well, not just the Americans." The Nepalese and Thai troops will be deployed as per the discussions with the Americans. Siddiq said he would meet with JSR Adada June 16 to discuss deployment issues. Siddiq concluded that "we are in a good position with the US - we are hopeful but realistic."

13. (C) CDA inquired about the statements made by the Sudanese PermRep to the UN that American companies would no longer be allowed to operate in Darfur. Siddiq said the Sudanese Ambassador did not have authorization to make these remarks, but acknowledged that absent a formal agreement, in principle American companies should not be allowed to operate in Darfur until US sanctions against Sudan are removed. CDA Fernandez urged caution, noting that this would limit UNAMID's ability to operate effectively and that Sudan would be rightly blamed for this. Siddiq said that in the long run Sudan has no problem with US companies in Darfur or anywhere else in Sudan if the bilateral relationship improves, "we have agreed in principle with Williamson about this."

14. (C) In response to a request from the CDA, Siddiq also promised to follow up on the visas for the remaining five US military officers assigned to UNAMID. He expected that these would be forthcoming relatively soon. UNAMID had only

recently issued Note Verbales to the Sudanese MFA requesting visas.

15. (C) Siddiq, who was a key participant in talks with SE Williamson, said that "we were really surprised" when Williamson walked out of talks since "we actually had an agreement" with the Americans on Darfur and on the bilateral relationship. He added that the Sudanese did not believe that tension over Abyei was the sole reason for the current suspension of further dialogue, noting that they suspected that internal bickering within the Bush Administration may have played a role. "Perhaps they think it would hurt them politically," he asked. Siddiq wondered whether there was enough time "on the American side" to arrive at a comprehensive agreement with Sudan, but quickly added "when you are ready. we will be ready at any point and will welcome an early resumption." CDA Fernandez noted that among the factors that will certainly influence future opportunities for dialogue will be the actual implementation of a June 8 SPLM-NCP agreement on Abyei and the outcome of the recent "troubling rebel offensive" in Eastern Chad. "This is nothing new to you," CDA noted, "we've warned you about events in Chad before." On Aryei, Siddiq added thqt "rom%tjijg gogd maY bm% out`of|he"vanLeoseil Oaq.m& oNled\jIw`agQecMm|QqlrePi oad~|el%QQ 6.(G*8U)d9soluduQla/n Qj&0ijQwTzimqf_o.QE@*?weagQx['mwQT|lQxQ+|A4Q s pro-Sudanese" but when they heard the same things from UNAMID officers in the

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field, they finally understood. He said that the PermReps were so badly informed that one asked for the Sudanese to give permission to land AN-124 aircraft in Darfur, unaware that Sudan does not oppose this but that only one airport in Sudan - Khartoum - can currently support the world's largest aircraft. He recalled a senior DPKO official boasting that DPKO would cover up its own deficiencies by blaming Sudan.

17. (C) Comment: It was quite clear from this meeting that the GOS is eager to resume formal bilateral talks with the US. Our impression is that the GOS will likely continue to be on its best behavior - "best" being a relative term for a mostly incorrigible actor like Sudan - in the coming weeks in hopes of facilitating their continuation. For now, the regime appears to have made a cold-blooded calculation that improved relations with the West in general and the US in particular are in its strategic interests. Siddiq was at pains to point out that Sudan did not condemn or criticize SE Williamson's walkout even though some in the local press had tried to spin Dr. Nafie's remarks that way. This Sudanese self-interested calculation could change quickly if the regime feels cornered with additional sanctions or ICC indictments, though even the indictments could well be mitigated depending on how they are presented. The key with the NCP is always the right combination of positive and negative reinforcement.
FERNANDEZ